

"DrawBridge ... provides an extremely playful, uplifting and safe environment for young people to tap into their creativity, as well as have a safe place to work through emotions with peers and adults." – Dorothy B., Teen Volunteer

Encouragement vs. Praise

Telling children that you love their drawing or something that they have done seems natural and often comes out automatically. Although this is usually a positive comment, it's also a judgment that sets children up to want approval from adults. Children may try to recreate an art piece that they know you liked in the past in order to hear you praise them again. One child may hear you praising another child but not them and feel left out or not as good.

- Praise is different than authentically loving and caring for a child.
- Praise can be used to control or encourage the behavior we want from children, taking advantage of their natural hunger for approval from adults.
- Rather than bolstering a child's self esteem, praise makes children dependant on us to feel good about themselves. It sets them up for seeing everything as good vs. bad.
- It encourages them to rely on our opinions of what's good or bad about themselves and the world.
- Using praise is different from working with children by engaging them in conversation about their opinions or just being present with them.

This cartoon on the next page illustrates the effects of praise on children: ['Good Job'](#)

Things you can say to encourage children with out saying "Good job!":

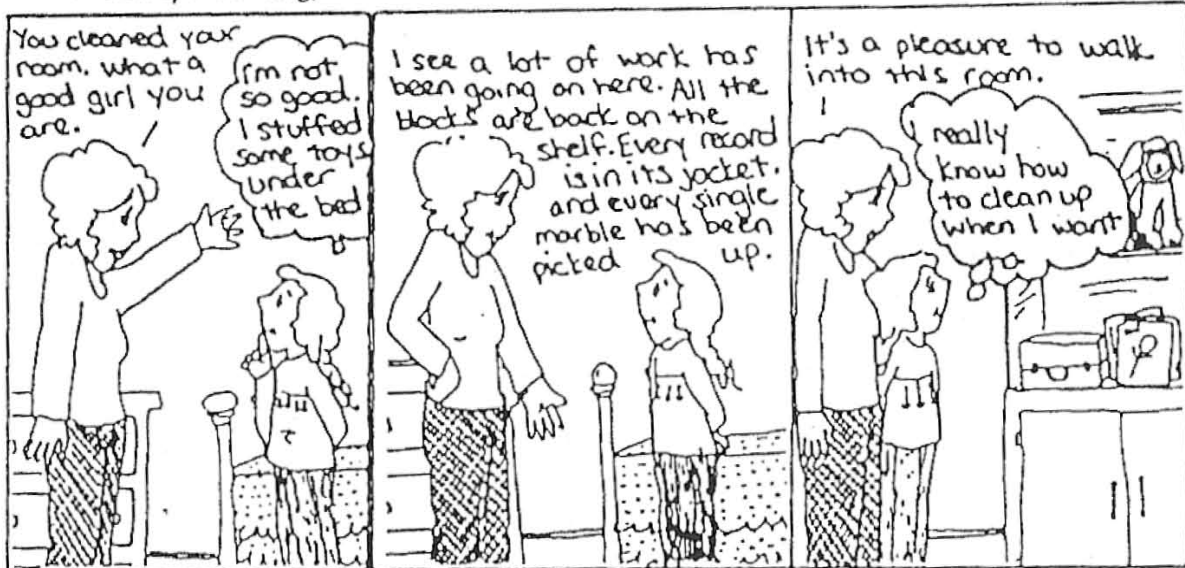
Sometimes the best environment for art making can be created when you bite your tongue! Since this is not always practical, here are some things you can say instead, when you feel the urge to gush. And remember being present is a way to show the children that you care. These phrases can assist in engaging the child about his or her work of art, rather than giving him or her your opinion.

- "Tell me about this picture"
- "I like the way you figured out how to do this all by yourself"
- "Which one of these is your favorite?"
- "I can see you really spent some careful time on this"
- "I like the way you used your colors"
- "I can see you really used your eyes when you drew this. You have so many good details here."

DESCRIPTIVE PRAISE.

Instead of evaluating,

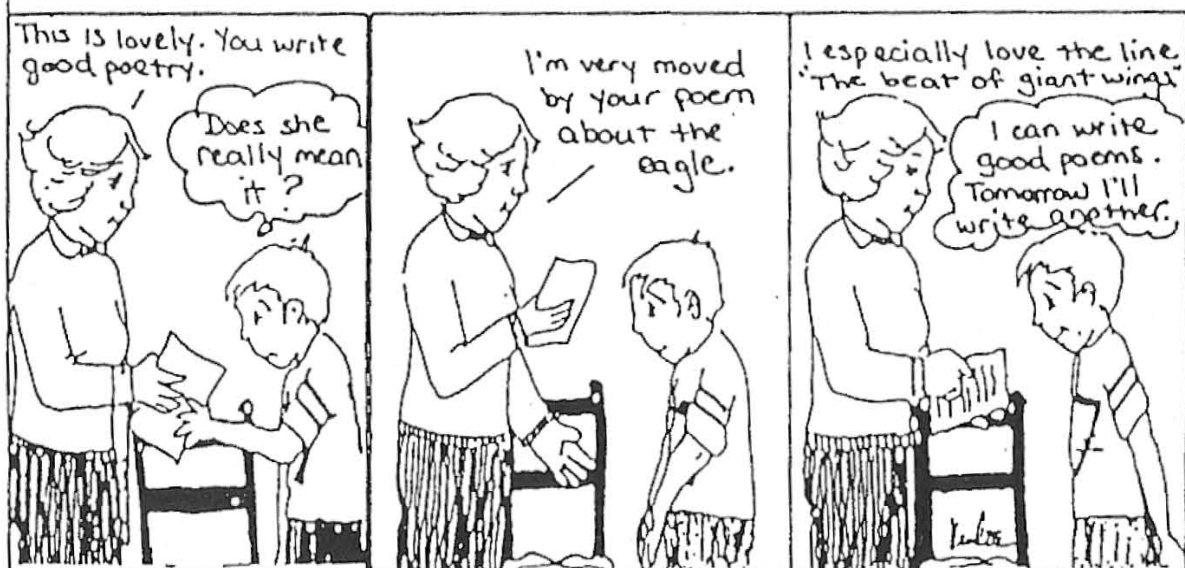
describe what you see or feel.



Describe



Describe



- “What a vibrant blue you’ve got here!”

Please take a look at this short Role Play clip showing a common art group scenario:



[Role Play Video \(I messed up\)](#)